

Message Text

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ACTION DHA-05

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DAKAR 6576

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PORG, UN, US, SG
SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH SENEGALESE CHIEF JUSTICE ON U.N.
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

REF: STATE 230589

1. DEPARTMENT HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER ROBERT MAXIM CALLED SEPTEMBER
29 ON SENEGALESE CHIEF JUSTICE AND REPRESENTATIVE ON
U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (UNHRC) KEBA M'BAYE, ACCOMPANIED
BY AMBASSADOR. FRIENDLY AND CANDID ONE HOUR DISCUSSION FOCUSED
LARGELY ON AFRICAN ASPECTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES
IN THE U.N.

2. M'BAYE'S REMARKS ON PROSPECTS FOR U.N. ACTION
ON UGANDA WERE PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY. IN RESPONSE
TO MENTION OF GROWING U.S. PUBLIC SENTIMENT THAT
WISHES TO SEE USG TAKE LEAD IN TRYING TO GET
U.N. CONDEMNATION OF UGANDA, M'BAYE COUNSELED STRONGLY
AGAINST U.S. ASSUMING "TORCH-BEARING" LEAD ROLE IN
SUCH EFFORTS. INDEED, M'BAYE FELT IT UNREALISTIC
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AND FUTILE TO SEEK OUTRIGHT CONDEMNATION OF UGANDA.
AFRICANS AND OTHERS WITH BAD HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS
WOULD PROBABLY BE SUCCESSFULLY MOBILIZED AGAINST IT
BY SOVIETS - EE'S WITH ARGUMENT THAT SUCH DENUNCIATION
WOULD BE A MOVE POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING FOR ALL.

3. M'BAYE SUGGESTED INSTEAD THAT UK MIGHT BE MOST

APPROPRIATE WESTERN STANDARD BEARER IN EFFORT TO GET DECISION -- EITHER AT THIS UNGA OR, PREFERABLY, AT UNHRC NEXT YEAR -- FOR AN OBJECTIVE INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATIVE MISSION TO EVALUATE FACTS OF SITUATION IN UGANDA. UK COULD BEST ELICIT INDISPENSABLE SUPPORT OF AFRICAN MEMBERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH. US MIGHT AND SHOULD PLAY STRONG SUPPORTING ROLE IN THIS KIND OF EFFORT, M'BAYE SAID, BUT SHOULD AVOID TAKING A LEAD POSITION WHICH THE SOVIETS WOULD REGARD AS A CHALLENGE THEY COULD NOT IGNORE.

4. WITHIN SENEGALESE CONTEXT, M'BAYE ASSERTED THERE WAS SIGNIFICANT AND INCREASING OFFICIAL GOS RESPONSIVENESS TO HIS EFFORTS. M'BAYE SAID HE BEGAN QUIET LOBBYING IN 1975 TO HAVE SENEGAL TAKE A MORE FORTHRIGHT POSITION OF CRITICIZING THIRD WORLD, ESPECIALLY AFRICAN, HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND MOVE AWAY FROM A POLICY OF DISCRETION IN THE INTEREST OF AFRICAN SOLIDARITY. M'BAYE ALSO SAID AFRICANS ON THE HRC ARE LINING UP BEHIND HIM AS THEIR CANDIDATE FOR COMMISSION CHAIRMAN.

5. M'BAYE EXPRESSED WARM PRAISE FOR THE NEWLY ACTIVIST US POLICY TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS AS EXEMPLIFIED BY AMBASSADOR LOWENSTEIN'S LEADERSHIP OF US DELEGATION TO THE LAST UNHRC SESSION IN GENEVA. THE
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CONTRAST WITH PERCEIVED PAST AMERICAN INACTIVITY, BUTTRESSED ESPECIALLY BY THE PERCEPTION OF CHANGED US POLICY ON SOUTHERN AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST HAD CONVINCED AFRICANS OF U.S. SINCERITY AND CREDIBILITY ON HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS, ACCORDING TO M'BAYE. HOWEVER HE IMPLIED THAT US SHOULD REVISE ITS STANDARDS FOR MEASURING PROGRESS IN UN FORA AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS. M'BAYE SAID HIS EXPERIENCE ON THE UNHRC INDICATED THAT SIMPLE FACT OF DEBATE OF COMPLAINTS AND CHARGES WAS DEEPLY EMBARRASSING TO THE COUNTRY ACCUSED AND ACCOMPLISHED VIRTUALLY AS MUCH AS OBTAINING A FORMAL CONDEMNATORY DECISION. (INFORMED OF MEZVINSKY APPOINTMENT AS NEW US REP TO UNHRC, M'BAYE EXPRESSED HIS INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING PERSONAL CONTACT.)

6. TIME LIMITATIONS PRECLUDED DETAILED FOCUS ON CREATING HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN UN, BUT DEPTOFF BRIEFED M'BAYE ON US AIMS AND APPROACH

TO ISSUE AT THIS UNGA.
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